my feelings. But I was an asset to the party as president of the Council of the Unemployed and also as a man with wide personal contacts with workers who was equally ready to speak before a crowd in a factory yard or a sophisticated Cadet audience. I did not speak much in committee meetings, however, partly because they bored me and partly because I felt hostility around me.

Strangely, the only man in the Bolshevist organization with whom I was close at that time was Lenin. He did not belong to the St. Petersburg organization officially but used it as a sounding board in his fight against the Mensheviks for control over the party. He knew, of course, that I was a dubious Marxist or no Marxist at all. But for some reason—Lenin did nothing without calculation—he became interested in me. After a Bolshevist conference in Kuokkala, Finland, where he was living in hiding, he asked me casually, "Would you come to see me tonight? We could chat over a cup of tea."

It was considered a great honor among the Bolsheviks to be invited to the Old Man's home. Moreover, he was one of the few men on the political horizon whom I respected. I accepted his invitation. He was living in a small two-room cottage typical of a Finnish peasant's. It was poorly furnished but neat, and there was a feeling of simple hospitality in its narrow living room.

I spent the evening with him and his wife, Krupskaya, and later was often their guest. Our relations never reached the stage of friendship; Lenin had no real friends around him, only people whom he wished to meet for some practical reason. I never knew what he expected of me, but between the middle of 1906 and the end of 1907 I met him almost every week and was closer to him than to anybody else in the party. Thus I learned to know not only the Old Man who was to play such a tragic role in Russian history a decade later, but also his inner circle, the Bolshevist Center.

The testimony of people who met Lenin at different phases of his life differs widely, and my personal impressions do not always agree with those of others. He was a complex personality, given to sudden changes in mood, manners, and relations with persons around him. He could be an irresistible charmer with those he wished to win as followers, but he impressed others as an arrogant snob. Moreover, the Lenin of 1906-7 whom I describe here was very different from the Lenin of 1917, of whom I shall speak later, and the Lenin who ruled all Russia ruthlessly in the 1920's.

He was a fanatic, but there was no fire in his fanaticism. Rather, it was cold, like a steel blade. He was perhaps the most unemotional man I have ever met in politics. No hate, no compassion, not even